

Message Text

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SUBJ CANADIAN NUCLEAR ROLE

REF OTTAWA 3157

IN CONNECTION WITH EMBASSY'S SUGGESTION CONTAINED REFTEL,
REPEATED BELOW IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE LEAD EDITORIAL IN
THE MONTREAL GAZETTE OF SEPTEMBER 30 COMMENTING ON EXTAFF
MINISTER MACEACHEN'S UNGA ADDRESS ON INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR
CONTROLS AND SUGGESTING THAT CANADA, AS ONE OF FOREMOST
SELLERS OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, SHOULD CONSIDER UNILATERAL
ACTION TO FOSTER STRICTER SAFEGUARDS.

BEGIN TEXT. CANADIAN NUCLEAR ROLE. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER
ALLAN MACEACHEN'S ADDRESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY, HIS FIRST MAJOR STATEMENT SINCE ASSUMING THE
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO, HAS INDICATED LITTLE CHANGE IN
CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY. THIS WAS, OF COURSE, EXPECTED AFTER
PRIME MINISTER PIERRE TRUDEAU HAD SAID HE WOULD NOT
ATTEND THE OPENING OF THE NEW SESSION BECAUSE HE HAD
NOTHING IMPORTANT TO SAY.

BY CONCENTRATING ON A SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL
CONTROLS ON NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO PREVENT MORE NATIONS
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FROM DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND ON PEACEKEEPING

ACTIVITIES, MR. MACEACHEN ATTEMPTED TO DEAL WITH TWO OF THE MOST CURRENTLY VISIBLE ASPECTS OF CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY. THE NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY ASPECT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF THE EMERGENCE OF INDIA AS A NUCLEAR POWER AND THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INDIA RECEIVED FROM CANADA.

MR MACEACHEN'S STATEMENT, HOWEVER, WAS TOO GENERALIZED AND DEVOID OF SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE OF CONCRETE ASSISTANCE. THIS IS UNFORTUNATE BECAUSE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT CONTRITION FOLLOWING THE INDIA NUCLEAR EXPLOSION MIGHT HAVE LED TO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS.

NO DOUBT THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT FINDS ITSELF IN THE AWKWARD POSITION OF BEING A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR ARMS (NPT) WHILE ALSO BEING ONE OF THE FOREMOST SELLERS OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, ALBEIT FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES.

LIMITATION PROBLEMS
THERE ARE, HOWEVER, PROPOSALS TO BE MADE WHICH CANADA COULD IMPLEMENT WHILE ALSO SELLING NUCLEAR REACTORS FOR ENERGY PROGRAMS.

THE MOST BASIC WOULD BE TO STOP SALES OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, SUCH AS THE CANDU NUCLEAR REACTORS, TO COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE NOT SIGNED AND RATIFIED THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY. AT PRESENT CANADA HAS A CANDU SALE PENDING WITH ARGENTINA, WHICH IS NOT A SIGNATORY TO THE NPT. SALES ARE ALSO BEING DISCUSSED WITH SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN. WHILE BOTH NATIONS ARE NPT SIGNATORIES, NEITHER HAS RATIFIED THE TREATY, AND NEITHER HAS SIGNED SAFEGUARD AGREEMENTS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA).

CLEARLY IT BECOMES DIFFICULT FOR THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TO INSIST ON SUCH STRINGENT TERMS, SINCE ONLY 78 NON-NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATES ARE PARTIES TO THE TREATY, OF WHICH ONLY 29 HAVE CONCLUDED SAFEGUARD UNCLASSIFIED

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AGREEMENTS WITH THE IAEA. SUCH AN APPROACH COULD DAMAGE CANDU SALES UNLESS COMPETITORS WOULD AGREE TO THE SAME COURSE.

INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION
MR MACEACHEN'S SUGGESTION OF PLACING ALL INVENTORIES OF NUCLEAR FISSILE MATERIALS HELD FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES UNDER INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION IS

A NATURAL ONE TO MAKE. IT DOES, HOWEVER, BECOME UNREALISTIC WHEN THE MAJORITY OF NATIONS HAVE NOT SIGNED SAFEGUARD AGREEMENTS WITH IAEA, THE LOGICAL BODY TO CARRY OUT SUCH SUPERVISION.

THIS THEN INDICATES THAT PERHAPS THE ONLY SOLUTION REMAINS FOR ALL COUNTRIES WHICH SELL NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAMS TO PRESSURE CLIENT NATIONS INTO PERMITTING SUPERVISION AND INSPECTION. FOR THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT THIS IS A TRICKY ISSUE BECAUSE IT DOES NOT WISH TO LOSE THE LEAD TIME IT HAS OVER OTHER NATIONS IN THE COMMERCIAL USE OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY.

IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE, THEN, THAT MR MACEACHEN SHOULD SEE JOINT INTERNATIONAL ACTION AS THE WAY OUT. BUT PERHAPS CANADA SHOULD BE WILLING TO MAKE SOME SACRIFICE, SUCH AS HOLDING OFF ON THE ARGENTINIAN SALE AND INSISTING UNILATERALLY ON STRICTER SAFEGUARDS IN ALL ITS SALES, IN ORDER TO FOSTER SUCH ACTION. AT PRESENT WE ARE REALLY JUST PASSING THE BUCK. END TEXT.
PORTER

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